



European Renewable Energy Council
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Austrian Government is putting the agreement on the most important piece of legislation on renewable energy in the world at risk

Brussels, 10th December 2008 - On the eve of the European Summit which will take place in Brussels on 11 and 12 December 2008, the Austrian Government seems to question the Austrian national objective of 34 % of renewable energy share in final energy consumption by 2020 and puts at question yesterday's agreement on the RES Directive reached by the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission (see EREC's press release of 9th December 2008).

As one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing European industry sectors with an annual turnover of more than 40 billion Euro and more than 400 000 employees, many of them in Austria, the European Renewable Energy Industry urges the Austrian government not to block an approval of the most ambitious piece of legislation on renewable energy in the world.

"I cannot understand the position of the Austrian Government to question the national target of 34 % of renewable energy share in final energy consumption at this point in time when the negotiations on the Renewable Energy Directive are finalized. The binding national renewable energy objectives are on the table since nearly a year and all other EU Member States have given their agreement. It is unimaginable that Austria is blocking this "new green deal" for Europe, says Christine Lins, Secretary General of EREC.

This position is even more surprising in view of the fact that the previous Austrian coalition announced a target of 45 % in its coalition agreement. Furthermore, the Austrian Renewable Energy Associations recently launched a position paper (available in German under <http://www.biomasseverband.at/static/mediendatenbank/root01/7.%20Publikationen/34%20Prozent%20EE.pdf>) indicating that a 34 % renewable energy share in final energy consumption is easily reachable and that the industry can effectively deliver much more than 34 %.

The European and Austrian Renewable Energy Industry urge the Austrian Government not to block a swift adoption of the energy and climate package which is now more than ever a necessity and an opportunity for Austria and for the EU as a whole.

“It is unacceptable that Austria is questioning the closed deal between the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission. Austria was always a forerunner-country for renewable energy deployment, the current attitude of the Austrian Government risks to undermine the future renewable energy policy of the whole European Union and puts the growth of the most prosperous economic sector of Europe at risk. We have negotiated long enough, now it is time to take action and to adopt the Renewable Energy Directive which will create many economic opportunities for all EU Member States”, adds Lins.

EREC, the European Renewable Energy Council, is the umbrella organisation of the major European renewable energy industry, trade and research associations active in the field of photovoltaics, small hydropower, solar thermal, bioenergy, ocean & marine, geothermal, wind energy, solar thermal electricity and biofuels. It represents an industry with an annual turnover of more than 40 billion € and more than 400.000 employees.